

## Amendments to the Claims

1      Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of using ~~enabling~~ an instant messaging (“IM”) user to  
2      specify policy information ~~usable~~ in responding to arrival of instant messages, comprising steps  
3      of:

4                defining, by [[the]] an instant messaging (“IM”) [[IM]] user, policy information specifying  
5                criteria for responding to arrival of instant messages, wherein the policy information comprises a  
6                list of selected application programs which are each distinct from an instant messaging application  
7                used by the IM user and which are each executable on a computing device of the IM user; [[and]]  
8                receiving using the defined policy information, upon arrival of an instant message from an  
9                IM sender who is not already participating in an IM session with the IM user;

10                programmatically determining, responsive to the receiving, whether any of the selected  
11                application programs in the list are currently executing on the computing device of the IM user;  
12                and [[,]]

13                responding to programmatically determine a response to the arriving arrival of the instant  
14                message by opening a new window on a graphical user interface of the computing device of the  
15                IM user and displaying the instant message therein if the programmatically determining step has a  
16                negative result, or by adding an icon representing the instant message to an already-open window  
17                but not displaying the instant message itself if the programmatically determining step has a  
18                positive result, wherein:

19                the already-open window comprises one of an already-open buddy list window that  
20                visually depicts a list of each IM partner from an IM address book of the IM user or an already-  
21                open status window that visually depicts a list of each currently-active IM partner of the IM user;

the icon is added in association with a representation, in the visually-depicted list, of the IM sender; and

the icon visually indicates that the instant message is available for on-request display and can be activated by the IM user to cause the on-request display of the instant message.

Claims 2 - 8 (canceled)

Claim 9 (currently amended): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the policy information is specified as a set of rules containing the criteria for opening a new IM window for incoming instant messages and wherein the programmatically determined response is to open a new IM window for the arriving instant message.

Claims 10 - 14 (canceled)

Claim 15 (currently amended): The method according to Claim [[14]] 1, further comprising the step of generating an wherein the audible indicator when the programmatically determining step has the positive result, is generated only if the policy indicates that a new IM window is not to be opened for displaying the arriving instant message.

Claims 16 - 27 (canceled)

1 Claim 28 (new): A system to use policy information in responding to arrival of instant messages,

2 comprising:

3 means for defining, by an instant messaging (“IM”) user, policy information specifying  
4 criteria for responding to arrival of instant messages, wherein the policy information comprises a  
5 list of selected application programs which are each distinct from an instant messaging application  
6 used by the IM user and which are each executable on a computing device of the IM user;

7 means for receiving an instant message from an IM sender who is not already participating  
8 in an IM session with the IM user;

9 means for programmatically determining, responsive to operation of the means for  
10 receiving, whether any of the selected application programs in the list are currently executing on  
11 the computing device of the IM user; and

12 means for responding to the arrival of the instant message by opening a new window on a  
13 graphical user interface of the computing device of the IM user and displaying the instant message  
14 therein if the means for programmatically determining yields a negative result, or by adding an  
15 icon representing the instant message to an already-open window but not displaying the instant  
16 message itself if the means for programmatically determining yields a positive result, wherein:

17 the already-open window comprises one of an already-open buddy list window that  
18 visually depicts a list of each IM partner from an IM address book of the IM user or an already-  
19 open status window that visually depicts a list of each currently-active IM partner of the IM user;

20 the icon is added in association with a representation, in the visually-depicted list,  
21 of the IM sender; and

22 the icon visually indicates that the instant message is available for on-request  
23 display and can be activated by the IM user to cause the on-request display of the instant message.

1       Claim 29 (new): A computer program product for using policy information in responding to  
2       arrival of instant messages, the computer program product embodied on one or more computer-  
3       readable storage media and comprising:

4               computer-readable program code for defining, by an instant messaging (“IM”) user, policy  
5       information specifying criteria for responding to arrival of instant messages, wherein the policy  
6       information comprises a list of selected application programs which are each distinct from an  
7       instant messaging application used by the IM user and which are each executable on a computing  
8       device of the IM user;

9               computer-readable program code for receiving an instant message from an IM sender who  
10      is not already participating in an IM session with the IM user;

11               computer-readable program code for programmatically determining, responsive to  
12      operation of the computer-readable program code for receiving, whether any of the selected  
13      application programs in the list are currently executing on the computing device of the IM user;  
14      and

15               computer-readable program code for responding to the arrival of the instant message by  
16      opening a new window on a graphical user interface of the computing device of the IM user and  
17      displaying the instant message therein if the computer-readable program code for  
18      programmatically determining yields a negative result, or by adding an icon representing the  
19      instant message to an already-open window but not displaying the instant message itself if the  
20      computer-readable program code for programmatically determining yields a positive result,  
21      wherein:

the already-open window comprises one of an already-open buddy list window that visually depicts a list of each IM partner from an IM address book of the IM user or an already-open status window that visually depicts a list of each currently-active IM partner of the IM user;

the icon is added in association with a representation, in the visually-depicted list,

of the IM sender; and

the icon visually indicates that the instant message is available for on-request

display and can be activated by the IM user to cause the on-request display of the instant message.